

## Message Text

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DRAFTED BY NEA:ALATHERTON,JR.:LB  
APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY  
S/S-O: MTANNER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 177831

NODIS  
CHEROKEE FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR, LE, US, JR, SA, SY

SUBJECT: ASAD'S MESSAGE VIA HUSSEIN ABOUT SOVIET PRESSURE  
ON SYRIA

REF: AMMAN 3751

1. FYI. REFTEL REPORTS MESSAGE ASAD HAS ASKED HUSSEIN TO  
CONVEY TO SHAH, KING KHALID, AND USG ABOUT GROWING SOVIET  
PRESSURES ON SYRIA BECAUSE OF ITS LEBANESE POLICIES. WE  
ARE ALSO REPEATING TO YOU OUR RESPONSE TO HUSSEIN. WE  
ASSUME SADAT WILL HEAR ABOUT THIS IN JIDDA EITHER FROM  
JORDANIANS (WE NOTE HUSSEIN IS SENDING AMER KHAMMASH TO  
SAUDI ARABIA TO BRIEF SADAT), OR FROM SAUDIS, OR BOTH.  
THIS OBVIOUSLY POSES DELICATE PROBLEM FOR US VIS-A-VIS  
EGYPTIANS, GIVEN THEIR LINGERING DISTRUST OF SYRIAN ROLE  
IN LEBANON AND PAST SUSPICIONS THAT WE WERE ENCOURAGING  
SYRIA IN THAT ROLE. IT IS OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT FOR US TO  
INFORM SADAT OF ASAD/HUSSEIN APPROACH AND OF HOW WE ARE  
REPLYING, TO KEEP THIS EXCHANGE FROM SOWING ANY SEEDS OF  
SUSPICION BETWEEN EGYPTIANS AND US. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE

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CONVEY FOLLOWING ORAL MESSAGE FROM ME TO MUBARAK OR RIAD

TO BE PASSED URGENTLY TO FAHMY AND SADAT. END FYI.

2. BEGIN MESSAGE.

KING HUSSEIN HAS INFORMED US OF A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ASAD, WHO SAYS THAT SYRIA IS COMING UNDER INCREASING SOVIET PRESSURE TO FORCE IT TO WITHDRAW FROM ITS ROLE IN LEBANON. ACCORDING TO HUSSEIN, ASAD IS ASKING FOR SUPPORT IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. ASAD ASKED THAT THIS MESSAGE BE CONVEYED TO THE SHAH, KING KHALID AND THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT KING HUSSEIN WILL ALSO SEEK TO INFORM PRESIDENT SADAT IN JIDDA. WE KNOW THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN SIGNALLING INCREASING DISPLEASURE WITH SYRIA, AND IT SEEMS TO US TO BE IN OUR INTERESTS, AND CONSISTENT WITH PRESIDENT SADAT'S AND OUR LONG RUN STRATEGY, TO AVOID ANYTHING WHICH WOULD ENHANCE SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SYRIA AND ENABLE SOVIETS TO DICTATE SYRIAN POLICY. WE ARE THEREFORE REPLYING TO HUSSEIN (AND WE ASSUME HE WILL CONVEY THIS TO ASAD) IN A GENERAL WAY. WE ARE SAYING THAT WE ARE INTERESTED IN SYRIA'S MAINTAINING ITS ABILITY TO PURSUE AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL POLICY FREE OF SOVIET PRESSURE. OUR REPLY WILL ALSO SAY THAT WE WILL WATCH THE SITUATION CLOSELY BUT THAT WE NEED TO KNOW MORE PRECISELY WHAT PRESIDENT ASAD HAS IN MIND IN THE WAY OF SUPPORT. WE WILL ALSO RECALL IN OUR REPLY THE SUPPORT WE HAVE EXPRESSED FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN LEBANON BASED ON THE FORMULA WORKED OUT IN JANUARY.

3. WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING PRESIDENT SADAT'S AND FAHMY'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION AND ANY SUGGESTIONS THEY MAY HAVE ABOUT HOW WE SHOULD REPLY TO PRESIDENT ASAD IF HE INDICATES TO US MORE PRECISELY WHAT HE WISHES US TO DO. I WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL TO RECEIVE PRESIDENT SADAT'S AND FAHMY'S VIEWS AND MEANWHILE SEND TO BOTH OF THEM MY WARM PERSONAL REGARDS. ROBINSON

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